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TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities
Expert Meeting on Ways to Enhance the Production and Export Capacities of Developing Countries of Agriculture and Food Products, Including Niche Products, Such as Environmentally Preferable Products
Geneva, 16-18 July 2001

PROVISIONAL AGENDA AND ANNOTATIONS

I. Provisional agenda

1. Election of officers
2. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work
3. Ways to enhance the production and export capacities of developing countries of agriculture and food products, including niche products, such as environmentally preferable products
4. Adoption of the outcome of the Meeting

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II. Annotations to the provisional agenda

Item 1: Election of officers

1. It is recommended that the Expert Meeting elect a Chairperson and a Vice-Chairperson-cum-Rapporteur.

Item 2: Adoption of the agenda and organization of work

2. The provisional agenda for the Expert Meeting is reproduced in section I above. The provisional schedule of meetings for the three days is given below.

Item 3: Ways to enhance the production and export capacities of developing countries of agriculture and food products, including niche products, such as environmentally preferable products

Demand for and trade in many agricultural products is on the increase. This is particularly true for fruit and vegetables, meat and fish as well as some processed and niche products. Furthermore, heightened consumer concerns about food safety and quality have generated increased demand for certain high-quality products and for organic food. This strong new trend gives rise to the prospect of mainstreaming some niche products and may also create new export opportunities,particularly if the expected reforms in agricultural policies are adopted by some developed countries.

The meeting will examine policy, market and technical aspects of the production of and trade in agricultural and food products. It will identify and evaluate opportunities and define what needs to be taken under the current market structures and access conditions. The likely areas of focus are: access to information and finance; research and development for quality production and processing; product differentiation; technical capacity; supportive policies at home and abroad; standards and certification; trademarks; incentives; marketing and facilitation measures; as well as scope for regional cooperation and business partnerships.

Documentation

TD/B/COM.1/EM.15/1 Ways to enhance the production and export capacities of developing countries of agriculture and food products, including niche products, such as environmentally preferable products.

Item 4: Adoption of the outcome of the Meeting

7. The Expert Meeting will adopt its outcome, which will be assessed by member States before being submitted to the Commission on Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities at its Sixth Session in February 2002. The final report will be compiled under the authority of the Chairperson after the conclusion of the Meeting.

SCHEDULE OF THE MEETING

Day 1 (16 July 2001)	Day 2 (17 July 2001)	Day 3 (18 July 2001)
(10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)	**(10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)**	**(10 a.m. – 1 p.m.)**
Plenary **Opening statement** **Item 1:** **Election of officers** **Item 2:** **Adoption of the agenda and** **Organization of work** **Informals** **Item 3:** Ways to enhance the production and export capacities of developing countries of agriculture and food products, including niche products, such as environmentally preferable products	**Informals (continued)** **Item 3:** **(continued)**	**Informals (continued)** **Item 3:** **(continued)**
(3p.m. – 6p.m.)	**(3 p.m. – 6 p.m.)**	**(3 p.m. – 6 p.m.)**
Informals (continued) **Item 3:** **(continued)**	**Informals (continued)** **Item 3:** **(continued)**	**Plenary (closing)** **Item 4: Adoption of the outcome of the Meeting**

Inputs from Experts

Experts nominated by member States are invited to submit brief papers in advance of the Meeting to the UNCTAD secretariat. These will be made available to other participants at the Meeting in the form and language in which they are received.

To facilitate a structured exchange of national experiences, experts are invited (but not required) to take into account the topics listed below when preparing inputs. They may choose to give special attention to one or more topics which are of most relevance to their national experience and from which lessons could be drawn for the benefit of the other participants. Concrete illustrative examples are encouraged.

Possible topics to be addressed:

Trends

- Production and export performance of food and agricultural products, including niche products (e.g. quantity, composition, value added, productivity, competitiveness);
- Impact of tariff preferences, e.g. for ACP countries;
- Impact of and prospects for regional trade in food products;
- Price premiums secured on organic products;
- Most promising niche and organic products for future production and export;
- Impact of subsidies and other support measures for agriculture in developed countries on the exports and competitiveness of food products from developing countries.

Enhancing production and export capacities

- Measures to enhance production and export opportunities for food and agricultural products in general and organic products in particular, including:
    - Research and market studies;
    - Drafting and implementing legislation;
    - Developing national standards for niche products and organic agriculture;
    - Agricultural support services;
    - Other types of government and technical support;
    - Developing local markets for organic products;
    - Awareness-raising on benefits and opportunities provided by organic agriculture;
    - Establishing certification/accreditation infrastructure for organic products and HACCP compliance in general;
    - Reducing certification costs;

- Role of national and local Governments, NGOs, farmer communities, business associations and other stakeholders in promoting production and exports of organic and other food products;
- Role of fair trade and alternative trading channels in enhancing developing countries' export capacities;
- Impact of multiple quality and organic standards and possible response strategies (e.g. mutual recognition, harmonization, improved information, SPS and TBT agreements);

- Desirability and practicality of amalgamating the different standards such as ISO 9000, ISO 14000 and HACCP.

Market strategies

- Market information needs (e.g. standards and regulations, market opportunities, etc.);
- Means of improving access to market information, particularly for small producers;
- Impact on production, prices and exports of the increasing importance in food trade of international retailing firms such as supermarket chains;
- Lessons learned regarding contractual and other links with supermarket chains and vertically integrated international food companies;
- Opportunities for direct sales by exporting countries' firms;
- Means of establishing brand names or differentiating products in important markets;
- Role of cooperative arrangements among exporters;
- Role of Governments.

- **Market access**
- Main barriers to entering international markets for food products, including organic products;
- Means of overcoming or eliminating these barriers;
- Ways to improve market access for food and agricultural exports from developing countries (e.g. simplified import and export procedures, improved application of the principles of equivalency and special and differential treatment for developing countries, use of tariff quotas to facilitate imports of organic products, etc.);
- Issues related to the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) in the context of organic standards and conformity assessment procedures;
- Desirability and feasibility of tariff preferences or a GSP system for organic products from developing countries;

Technical assistance

- Major technical assistance needs with regard to promoting production and exports of food and agricultural products, including organic products (e.g. policy and market analysis, quality and organic products;
- Role of UNCTAD, together with ITC and other relevant international organizations.

Experts are kindly requested to submit their papers (hard copy and electronic format,) by 6 July 2001 to: Sophia Twarog, Division on International Trade in Goods and Services, and Commodities, UNCTAD, E.8034, Palais des Nations, CH-1211 Geneva 10, Switzerland, Tel: ++41 22 907 5082; fax: ++41 22 917 0247; e-mail: sophia.twarog@unctad.org